

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A liquid product, ~~which~~ that is water- or milk-based and comprises living microorganisms, the liquid product having a pH from about 4 to about 7.5 and a shelf-life of at least 1 month at 10°C, during which period the liquid product demonstrates at least one characteristic chosen ~~selected~~ from the group consisting of a pH of the product decreasing less than 2 points, ~~and an amount of living microorganisms decreasing less than 2 log-units—occurs—, and combinations thereof, and which~~ wherein the liquid product is free of carbohydrates that can be metabolised by the microorganisms.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The product according to Claim 1, comprising a component selected from the group consisting of milk proteins, lactose, milk and milk-derived solids.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The product according to Claim 1, wherein the microorganisms do not use lactose as a nutrient.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The product according to Claim 1, wherein the microorganisms are selected from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus*, *Bifidobacterium*, *Streptococcus*, *Lactococcus*, *Enterococcus* and mixtures of same.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The liquid product according to Claim 1, wherein the shelf life of the product is at least 1 month at 20°C during which period the product experiences a decrease in pH of less than 2 points and during which the loss of living microorganisms is less than 2 log-units.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The product according to Claim 1, wherein the microorganisms are probiotics.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The product according to Claim 1, having, at a beginning of the shelf life, a pH of 4 or greater.

Claim 8 (withdrawn): A method for manufacturing a liquid, water- or milk-based delivery system for micro-organisms, comprising the steps of:

fermenting a medium to obtain a biomass of living micro-organisms, and
adding the biomass to a water-based liquid which is free of carbohydrates that can be metabolised by the micro-organism.

Claim 9 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 8, wherein the step of fermenting a medium is conducted for at least 7 hours at above 30°C.

Claim 10 (withdrawn): A method for providing to a consumer living micro-organisms in a water- or milk based liquid, the method comprising the step of administering to a consumer a product which is water- or milk-based and comprises living micro-organisms, having a shelf-life of at least 1 month at 10°C, during which period at least one characteristic chosen from the group consisting of a pH of the product decreasing less than 2 points and an amount of living bacteria decreasing less than 2 log-units occurs and which is free of carbohydrates that can be metabolised by the micro-organisms.

Claim 11 (withdrawn): A method of producing micro-organisms in water- or milk based liquid, shelf-stable products comprising the steps of using living micro-organisms, having a shelf-life of at least 1 month at 10°C, during which at least one characteristic chosen from the group consisting of a pH of the product decreasing less than 2 points and an amount of living bacteria decreasing less than 2 log-units occurs and which is free of carbohydrates that can be metabolised by the micro-organisms.

Claim 12 (canceled):

Claim 13 (withdrawn): A method for providing to an individual benefits of living probiotics, the method comprising the step of administering to the individual living micro-organisms, having a shelf-life of at least 1 month at 10°C, during which at least one characteristic chosen from the group consisting of a pH of the product decreasing less than 2 points and an amount of living bacteria decreasing less than 2 log-units occurs and which is free of carbohydrates that can be metabolised by the micro-organisms.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): A method for distributing living micro-organism in a consumable form, the method comprising the steps of distributing a product which is water- or milk-based and comprises living micro-organisms, having a shelf-life of at least 1 month at 10°C, during which at least one characteristic chosen from the group consisting of a pH of the product decreasing less than 2 points and an amount of living bacteria decreasing less than 2 log-units occurs and which is free of carbohydrates that can be metabolised by the micro-organisms.